



# Sisters of St. Casimir

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**SISTER GRACE ANN KALAFUT, SSC  
(formerly Sister M. Patrick )  
September 18, 1935 – August 24, 2023**



Grace Ann Kalafut was born September 18, 1935, to George and Estelle Rusin Kalafut in Chicago, IL. Grace Ann was the oldest of four children. She began her education at St. Simon Elementary School and then St. Rita Elementary School before enrolling at St. Casimir Academy.

On her Golden Jubilee Sister Grace Ann wrote:

*“Through the influence of the Sisters of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (St. Simon Parish) in my early life and the Sisters of St. Casimir in my high school years (St. Casimir Academy/Maria High School), I became attracted to religious life as a calling to serve God. Little did I know, as I entered religious life in my senior year of high school, that my life would unfold in the many wonderful ways in which it has,*

*more so than I could have ever planned for myself.”*

Here's some of how her life unfolded:

Grace Ann attended St. Casimir Academy when it transitioned into Maria High School and was therefore part of the first graduating class in 1953. During her senior year, inspired and influenced by the many religious women who had touched her life, Grace Ann entered the Sisters of St. Casimir as a postulant. Grace Ann continued preparing to become a Sister of St. Casimir, taking the name Sister M. Patrick and making her first vows in 1955. She also pursued studies to prepare herself for her life-long ministries in education, eventually earning a B.S. in Education from Marywood College in Scranton, PA and an M.A. in Education from Loyola University, Chicago, IL. Later, she also received a Religious Education Certificate from Mundelein College in Chicago, IL.

In 1956, Sister Grace Ann began her long life of ministry and service within the church as an educator. Her ministry took her to six states: Illinois, New Mexico, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. For 18 years, she taught in the primary grades. Over time, she added administrative duties to her education ministry. In 1967, she became principal of Our Lady of Vilna School in Chicago while teaching grades 3 and 4. In 1974, she became principal of Saints Peter and Paul School in the West Pullman area of Chicago. In 1980, she took her talents to the congregation's high schools. At Villa Joseph Marie High School in Holland, PA, she taught religion until she became assistant principal 1982-1983.

In 1983, she returned to Chicago to become assistant principal of Maria High School for two years. From 1985 – 1991 she served as principal of Maria High School. In 1991, she returned to Villa Joseph Marie as assistant principal and teacher.

In 1993, she returned home to Chicago, bringing her administrative skills back to the congregation. She was elected to Congregational Leadership, serving first as Councilor and then as General Treasurer.

Her life's path introduced her to new experiences and cultures even as it exposed her to the poverty and the difficulties that so many people she served endured. Still, she willingly followed God and found joy in doing His work. Continuing her golden jubilee reflection, she wrote:

*“Throughout these years, I have been called to minister in situations that challenged me to go beyond my own beginnings and what was familiar to me and come to know and be enriched by the African American and Hispanic cultures in the neighborhoods I served. I continue to reach out and serve the needs of the poor in the area around our Motherhouse through my work in the Food Pantry. I always felt that God was directing my life, and everything was a special blessing from God.”*

To this end, Sister Grace Ann, went the extra mile in Mexican and Black communities, dedicating her life to help end racial discrimination and to advance the interests of minority schools by helping revise policy, curriculum, and teacher training. She also worked to improve life in the Marquette Park community by participating in the activities of SWOP (Southwest Organizing Project) to address issues challenging the neighborhoods around the Motherhouse. She volunteered regularly at the SSC Food Pantry and recruited additional volunteers, including her sister Vern and nephew George. In addition, she assisted and chaired the SSC annual Summerfest and Founders' Day mini fest. She was a Summerfest dynamo!

Sister Grace Ann loved life. Her family was her greatest treasure. She was so proud of her nieces and nephews and their families, talked about what everyone was doing. Additionally, she was a great sports fan, cheering her Chicago White Sox, Blackhawks, Bears and Bulls to victory.

Sister Grace Ann was actively involved with several organizations and committees, sharing her time, talent, and enthusiasm with them. Some of these include: ITRI (Illinois Treasurers of Religious Institutes), NRRO (National Religious Retirement Office), Parish Cluster, congregational planning committees, and Motherhouse liturgy committee.

Sister Grace Ann also had the opportunity to travel outside the country and connect with our Congregational roots in Lithuania and our Congregational mission in Argentina. She also travelled to Slovakia to connect with her personal roots.

## REACHING OUT TO OTHERS IN VARIOUS WAYS



MARCHING WITH SISTERS AND PEOPLE IN ARGENTINA



MEETING WITH SISTER GENEVIEVE KRIPAS PRIOR TO SUMMERFEST



MEETING WITH URBAN PLUNGE STUDENTS FROM NOTRE DAME



JOINING WITH MARIA HIGH ALUMNAE DURING THEIR REUNION



MEETING WITH STUDENT FROM VJM



MEETING WITH ASSOCIATE MADELINE TOVAR



SSC PANTY STAFF RECEIVING DONATIONS FROM MARIA HIGH SCHOOL

Personal remembrances:

*To Sr. Grace Ann's community and family,*

*I join you in thanking God for the gift of Sr. Grace Ann's life and ministry as a Sister of St. Casimir. She was blessed with a long life and helped steward the gifts of God for her community and the many lives she touched. May she now experience the fullness of God's Life and Love which is Heaven! I join in prayer for her eternal happiness and pray for an increase of religious vocations.*

*Fr. John Schork, CP*

*Provincial Treasurer*

*The Passionists of Holy Cross Province, Park Ridge, IL (a member of ITRI)*

*My deepest condolences to the Sisters of St. Casimir on the loss of Sister Grace Ann. I remember working closely with Sister at bake sales and enjoyed seeing her at Saturday Masses (coffee and breads). May the choirs of angels come to greet her and lead her into paradise.*

*Elizabeth Pienta*

*Sister Grace Ann was truly a wonderful and devoted member of your community. She was a great teacher, and I truly appreciated her guidance and support over the years. I know she was welcomed into heaven with open arms!!*

*May she rest in peace. Anita Alvarez*

*(Anita Alvarez, student of Sister Grace Ann at Our Lady of Vilna School and former Cook County's State Attorney)*

Sister Grace Ann lived her life in a spirit of trust in God's love for her. This unquestioning trust is expressed in a quote by St. Frances De Sales, a quote she used to end her reflection on her 60<sup>th</sup> diamond jubilee:

*"Do not fear what will happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day."*

We are grateful to God for Sister Grace Ann and the many talents God gave her. May she now enjoy the fullness of life and peace in God's presence forever.





Sister Grace Ann was preceded in death by her parents, George and Estelle Rusin Kalafut and her sister Veronica (Joseph) Devereux.

She is survived by her sister, Carole (Paul) Valtos (Schnecksville, PA) and their children Carolyn (Scott) Espe (Minot, ND), Chris (Samantha) Valtos (Nazareth, PA), and Eric (Andrea) Valtos (Hewitt, NJ), her brother, Kenneth Kalafut (Temple, TX) and his children Megan Barnett (New York, NY) and Kendra Barnett (New York, NY), and the children of her late sister Veronica (Joseph) Devereux: George (Susan) Devereux (Chicago, IL), Brian Devereux (Elk Grove, IL), Kathy (Tom) O'Connell (Edina, MN), Kenny Devereux (Chicago, IL), and Kevin Devereux (La Grange Park, IL), and many grandnieces and grandnephews.

Deceased members of Sister Grace Ann's Profession Class:

Sister M. Eva Revas  
Sister Margaret Anne Melavage  
Sister Wanda Marie Kamza

Living members of Sister Grace Ann's Profession Class:

Sister M. Dolorine Lopez  
Sister Bernadette Marie Janus  
Sister Rita Marie Kerdock

**Visitation, Wake Service, Mass of the Resurrection**

Wednesday, August 30, 2023  
Franciscan Village Chapel  
1270 Village Drive  
Lemont, IL 60439

**Welcome and Wake Service:** 10:45 a.m.

**Wake:** 11:00 a.m. - noon

**Mass of the Resurrection:** noon

Celebrant: Father Ken Baker

**Interment:** Saint Casimir Cemetery

**Funeral Director:** Lack and Sons

Mass will be livestreamed and recorded for viewing later.



Sister Grace Ann's blessings for us

Lord, help us to continue our journey into the  
NEW – whatever it may mean to us for the  
NOW!

Bless each sister in the Community to be a woman  
of Wisdom in her own way and share it with  
whomever they come into contact.

Bless us so that we can be open to who we are now  
to move into the future and accept what may be for  
us.

Bless us to carry on with our dreams, being open  
to the new challenges and to see them fulfilled.

Bless us in our “letting go(s)” just as Jesus let go by  
his dying on the cross for us.

Bless us to see the mystery of life that is unfolding  
before us – in our discernments, sharing our hopes  
and fears.

Bless us in our personal yearnings in the light  
of faith as we follow in the footsteps of Mother  
Maria.

Bless us in our daily thanksgivings for all that we  
have – gift of life, faith, hope, love, our talents  
shared in our ministries for your glory.

Bless us as we spend our elder years with a positive  
attitude and acceptance of God's abundant  
goodness.

– Sister Grace Ann Kalafut, SSC